

SENIOR CARE POLICY BRIEFING



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NEWSFLASH

- The United States Senate Special Committee on Aging held a hearing, [Assisted Living Facilities: Understanding Long-Term Care Options for Older Adults](#), co-chaired by Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) and Senator Mike Braun (R-IN) on January 25.
 - ⇒ Recent investigative reports in [The New York Times](#) and [The Washington Post](#) uncovered significant concerns that seniors and their families are, too often, victimized financially by hidden fees and personally by inadequate care and monitoring.
 - ⇒ The hearing included [testimony from LTCCC Executive Director Richard Mollot](#). Mollot spoke about how the absence of any federal quality or safety standards, coupled with the virtual absence of reliable public information on the quality, safety, and costs of assisted living, have made assisted living a sector ripe for investment by sophisticated private enterprises.
- The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) plans to finalize its minimum staffing rule for nursing homes in 2024, [according to a statement from Dora Hughes](#), MD, acting CMS chief medical officer.

“[C]hallenges make it harder for families to find the information that they need about assisted living facilities, including how much it will cost, the quality of the services they receive, and how safe their family member will be.”

-Senator Bob Casey, Senate Hearing, [“Assisted Living Facilities: Understanding](#)

LTC BY THE NUMBERS

- Only 38 percent of nursing home residents have received their latest COVID vaccination, [according to the CDC](#). The low vaccination rates are contributing to the vulnerability of at-risk populations as evidenced by the reported [500-plus resident deaths](#) from COVID in the first two weeks of 2024.

GET THE FACTS

- Contrary to the nursing home industry’s public complaints about low Medicaid margins and threats of closures – both of which are unsubstantiated – [an industry publication reports](#) that “the growth outlook has improved” for nursing homes.
 - ⇒ “All this means that operators are navigating through current challenges well, and the sector appears poised for growth and opportunities,” according to experts cited in the article, which predicts that Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) loans will increase, and that these favorable economic indicators for nursing homes will lead to greater M&A (mergers and acquisitions) activities.

Why is this important? HUD loans are essentially a means by which the American public underwrites for-profit nursing homes. Shouldn’t we expect that, at a minimum, they consistently meet minimum safety standards?

Assisted Living by the Numbers*:

- Assisted living residents are actually older, on average, than those in nursing homes.
- Approximately 40 – 70% of residents have Alzheimer’s Disease or some other cognitive impairment.
- Over 50% have hypertension.
- One-third or more have heart disease or depression.
- About half need help with dressing and/or walking.
- 64% need help with bathing.

*Via [LTCCC’s testimony](#) at US Senate hearing.

